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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 000964

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STATE FOR NEA/ARP, NEA/RA

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TAGS: [MOPS](#) [MCAP](#) [KNNP](#) [PTER](#) [IR](#) [IZ](#) [AE](#)

SUBJECT: ABU DHABI CROWN PRINCE TALKS IRAN/IRAQ WITH USNAVCENT  
COMMANDER VICE ADMIRAL COSGRIFF

Classified by Ambassador Michele Sison, reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶1. (S) Summary. Abu Dhabi Crown Prince and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (MbZ) met with Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/U.S. Fifth Fleet Vice Admiral Kevin J. Cosgriff in Abu Dhabi on June 6. MbZ stressed the need for communication and planning in face of growing Iranian aggression, and sought information from Cosgriff about Iranian capabilities. MbZ warned the Admiral not to underestimate Iranian patience, stating that Iran's goal is clear even though the Iranians try to keep international attention and focus elsewhere.

¶2. (S) Summary cont.: Shifting to Iraq, MbZ said that the UAE would support Maliki, not because they believe in him, but because the U.S. and UAE are allies (MbZ added "how can we trust someone running policy whose payroll comes from Iran?") MbZ then repeated an earlier recommendation that the U.S. get out of the cities in Iraq and focus on border security or face losing more soldiers. MbZ stated that Iraq needs a strong leader who can hold the country together for five years and that the U.S. needs to be very careful in who in Iraq they take advice from, as the "real war" is yet to come. End Summary.

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Iran  
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¶3. (C) MbZ queried Vice Admiral Cosgriff at the opening of the evening meeting for thirty minutes regarding U.S. Naval operations in the Gulf and Iranian activities and capabilities. MbZ was particularly interested in knowing how far the Iranians were from having the cascade facilities to produce weapons grade plutonium and the capabilities of Iranian submarines. Cosgriff admitted to being no expert on this subject but believed that Iran is still some years away from having a sufficient cascade. He added that the Iranian navy is struggling to even maintain their current fleet. MbZ asked how Iran was able to keep its F-14 fighters flying 28 years after the U.S. cut off support for the aircraft. Cosgriff replied that Iran is only able to maintain its air force by cannibalizing existing aircraft to keep others operational. MbZ stated that his greatest worry is Qot how much we know about Iran, but how much we don't know." Cosgriff agreed with this observation.

¶4. (C) Responding to the Admiral's reassurances about Iranian capabilities, MbZ warned that any culture that is patient and focused enough to spend years working on a single carpet, is capable of waiting years and even decades to achieve even greater goals. Iran's goal is clear, he declared -- a new Greater Persian Empire wielding the influence of a nuclear weapon. MbZ postulated that many of Iran's activities in the broader region are conducted through surrogates such as Hizballah and are meant to keep international focus and attention in Lebanon and Palestine and away from where the real danger lies in Tehran. MbZ complained that the UAE, as a small country caught in a region of big players, is not part of the decision making process that most directly impacts their welfare. "We all know what the Iranians are doing, we all know how they are

likely to react to various actions, but yet we are still not cooperating."

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Iraq  
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15. (C) MbZ told the Admiral that the U.S. is not fighting just the Shi'a influence in Iraq, but everyone including the Sunnis, Baathists, etc. Even as a Sunni himself, he said, he would not trust the Iraqi Sunnis any more than he can trust Maliki. "How can you trust someone running policy whose payroll comes from Iran?" MbZ asked. He then added that the UAE would support Maliki, not because they trust him, but because the UAE and U.S are allies and the U.S. has chosen to back him. In response to Ambassador's question, MbZ said that the UAE has extended an invitation to Maliki for an official visit, but that he has not yet accepted. MbZ offered that he is gathering information through unofficial channels that Maliki wanted to know "what was in it for him" if he visited, before he accepts an invitation. (Note: On May 13, Maliki Chief of Staff Dr. Tarik Najem Abdullah visited Abu Dhabi and met with UAE State Security Director Sheikh Hazza bin Zayed, MbZ's brother, in MbZ's absence -- MbZ was enroute to Washington. Najem was told that Maliki was welcome to visit Abu Dhabi whenever he wished, according to UAEG sources. End Note.)

16. (C) Cosgriff asked where MbZ thought Iraq was headed, to which MbZ replied with a story about tribal vengeance. "Iraq is a bigger issue than just tribal vengeance," MbZ began, "but the violence is just as intractable." MbZ said the decision to hold elections is proving disastrous and that what the country really needs is a strong leader who can hold the country together through a rough period of reform. "If they kill each other, so be it . . . you can't stop it, but don't get caught up in it," he said. One area the U.S needs to be careful in though, MbZ offered, is the relationships that you choose to

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engage in. Stating that the image of the U.S. throughout the Middle East is heavily influenced by relationships they pursue, MbZ warned that "if you have a relationship with someone like Chalabi -- you will be judged by that relationship."

17. (C) Wondering if the U.S. administration is getting accurate information in Iraq, MbZ told the Admiral that there are people in the Iraqi government that he would "not trust to take his dog out." MbZ suggested that the U.S. needs to get out of fighting in the Iraqi cities and focus more on border security before we "lose too many young men." He warned, "You are not fighting the real war today -- the real war is still coming."

18. (C) Following up on a meeting earlier in the day with UAE Chief of Staff General Hamad Thani Al-Rumeithy, Vice Admiral Cosgriff described the Coalition's shared goals of regional maritime security and global stability. Vice Admiral Cosgriff described benefits of Coalition membership including operational information and intelligence sharing, planning and operational/tactical procedure insights, and participation in patrols/exercises in the Gulf. Cosgriff noted that USNAVCENT and the Coalition would welcome UAE formally joining the Coalition.

19. (U) The meeting was attended by Abu Dhabi Crown Prince and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan; UAE Armed Forces Chief of Staff Lt. General Hamad Mohammed Thani Al-Rumeithy; Commander of Special Operations Major General Juma Al-Bawardi Al-Falasi; Director of Military Intelligence and Security Brigadier Essa Al-Mazrouei; and Director of International Relations for the Crown Prince's Court Yousef Al-Otaiba. The Vice Admiral was accompanied by Ambassador, USLO Chief, Embassy Naval Attache, PolOff, and Vice Admiral's staff aide.

110. (U) Vice Admiral Cosgriff has cleared this message.

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